



**State of Tennessee**  
**Department of Children's Services**

**Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.52**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Eligibility for Interdependent Living and Voluntary Post-Custody Services</b>
<b>Authority:</b>	The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999; TCA 37-5-106
<b>Standards:</b>	DCS Practice Model 8-108, PA-CM 8.01, PA-CM 8.05
<b>Application:</b>	All DCS Employees Working with Interdependent Living Services Youth

**Policy Statement:**

The Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) shall provide Interdependent Living Services to youth in state custody 14 to 18 years of age. Youth adjudicated delinquent and in state custody may receive specified Interdependent Living services up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, commensurate with their placement status. DCS shall provide Voluntary Post-Custody Services to eligible young adults exiting custody at 18, or up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, and requesting to receive such services from DCS. Voluntary Post-Custody services may be provided up to the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, and may be extended up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday based on a young adult's status and continued eligibility.

**Purpose:**

Interdependent Living Services are designed to help youth (ages 14 to 18) and young adults (ages 19 to 23, in some cases) develop supportive relationships with adults (facilitate permanency), acquire an array of life skills, encourage the recognition and utilization of community resources, and increase self-esteem and self-empowerment.

This policy hopes to outline eligibility criteria for Interdependent Living Services and Voluntary Post-Custody Services. The provision of Voluntary Post-Custody Services is an extension of Interdependent Living Services, and is designed to expand upon such service options for eligible young adults

**Procedures:**

<b>A. Eligibility for Interdependent Living Services</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All youth in state custody 14 to 19 years of age are eligible for Interdependent Living Services as outlined in <a href="#">DCS Policy 16.53, Identifying and Accessing Interdependent Living Services</a>. <a href="#">Family Service Workers (FSWs)</a> shall ensure that such services are provided, and documentation of such services in each youth's official record occurs.</li><li>2. Youth adjudicated delinquent are to be afforded access to the same Interdependent Living Service options, with the following restrictions: Youth placed in secured facilities are not eligible for federal Chafee funds. Such facilities include Youth Development Centers and detention facilities. It is the responsibility of such facilities to provide comparable Interdependent Living</li></ol>
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	<p>Services utilizing the available funding streams and resources.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Youth categorized as <a href="#">Runaways</a> are eligible for Interdependent Living Services upon return to the care of DCS.</li><li>4. Youth categorized as <a href="#">Escapees</a> are ineligible for Interdependent Living Services upon return to the care of DCS, when returning to a secure facility.</li><li>5. Youth receiving Voluntary Post-Custody Services as provided by DCS <a href="#">Policy 16.54, Provisions of Voluntary Post-Custody Services to Young Adults</a>, are eligible for specified Interdependent Living Services as outlined in DCS Policy 16.53, Identifying and Accessing Interdependent Living Services.</li><li>6. Youth receiving Transitional Living Services as the Voluntary Post-Custody Services option are eligible to receive Interdependent Living Services. However, these services shall be rendered as outlined in the established scope of such specific service options by the provider agency.</li><li>7. Youth who exited state custody to permanency via adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship at or after age 16 are eligible for specified Interdependent Living Services as outlined in DCS Policy 16.53, Identifying and Accessing Interdependent Living Services.</li></ol>
<b>B. Maintenance of Eligibility for Interdependent Living Services</b>	<p>Youth maintain eligibility for Interdependent Living Services, as funded and provided by DCS, until they exit state custody or DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services. <u>The potential maximum age that a youth receiving DCS Post-Custody Services may receive Interdependent Living Services is up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday.</u></p>
<b>C. Eligibility for Voluntary Post-Custody Services as Provided by DCS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Young adults who emancipate to adulthood directly from state custody at or after 18 years of age are eligible for Voluntary Post-Custody Services. Family Service Workers shall ensure that such services are provided, and documentation of such services in each youth's official record occurs.</li><li>2. Youth adjudicated delinquent are to be afforded access to the same service options, with the following restrictions: <u>Delinquent youth must have been in a foster care placement during the current custodial episode, prior to attaining 18 years of age.</u> Youth placed in secured facilities upon attaining 18 years of age are not eligible for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services. Such facilities include Youth Development Centers and detention facilities. Such youth may be eligible for a limited and specified portion of Voluntary Post-Custody Services as outlined <u>in section E</u> of this policy.</li><li>3. All young adults served under a DCS post-custody intake as outlined in DCS <a href="#">Policy 16.54, Provisions of Voluntary Post-Custody Services to Young Adults</a>, must have an educational plan or a job-training plan described in the Interdependent Living Plan. Such planning may include high school, GED, vocational/ technical school training, a trade school, apprenticeships or college or university programs.</li><li>4. There are circumstances when it is acceptable to provide DCS Voluntary</li></ol>

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	<p>Post-Custody Services to otherwise eligible young adults who are not engaged in an educational or job-training program. Such circumstances include young adults waiting to enroll in the next available term or semester for an educational or job-training program, or to transfer to <b>Transitional Living Services</b>. The time frame for such transitions to occur cannot be excessive (a CFTM will be required if time frames exceed 60 days), and the young adult shall be employed during this time frame.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Young adults receiving <b>DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services</b> shall work with their Child and Family Team (CFT) to identify a safe and affordable housing option. This may include a foster home, dorm, apartment, or boarding house (formal and informal).</li><li>6. Youth 16 years of age or older who exit state custody to adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship may be eligible for a limited and specified portion of post-custody services. ( See II Wraparound List/Protocol).</li><li>7. Youth who are undocumented residents of the United States are not eligible for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody services.</li></ol>
<b>D. Maintenance of Eligibility for Voluntary Post-Custody Services as Provided by DCS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Young adults may be eligible to receive DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services until goals related to educational or job training, and an agreement by the CFT that the young adult is reasonably capable of self-sufficiency, occurs, up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</li><li>2. All Chafee funded services and incentives shall end when young adults achieve their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Young adults receiving Educational and Training vouchers upon achieving their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday may continue to receive certain specific and adjusted Voluntary Post-Custody services potentially up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. (See <a href="#">DCS Policies 16.54, Provisions of Voluntary Post-Custody Services to Young Adults</a> and <a href="#">16.56, Interdependent Living Direct Payment Allowance</a>).</li><li>3. Young adults, in conjunction with their Child and Family Teams, shall determine the scope and appropriateness of service needs within the overall margins of eligibility as defined in this policy. Factors that may jeopardize continued eligibility for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services may include young adults:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Consistently refusing to work collaboratively with the Child and Family Team to make progress on mutually agreed upon goals, to include educational objectives and reasonable efforts to increase self-sufficiency.</li><li>b) Conviction of a felony offense.</li><li>c) Exhibiting a pattern of behavior that jeopardizes the safety and well being of self or others.</li></ol></li></ol>

	<p>d) Establishing legal residence in another state or country.</p> <p>4. <u>Young adults who marry may only be eligible for limited and specified portions of Voluntary Post-Custody Services as outlined in section E of this policy.</u></p>
<b>E. Eligibility for Transitional Living Services</b>	<p>1. The availability of Voluntary Post-Custody Services may be mitigated by the ability of DCS to support aspects of a young adult's overall Interdependent Living Plan. Such factors may include the young adult not emancipating to adulthood from state custody, educational status upon emancipating to adulthood (which could affect the ability of DCS to support continued placement via existing funding streams), loss of eligibility for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services, or the youth's age.</p> <p>2. <b>Transitional Living Services are considered a version of Voluntary Post-Custody Services, but may also be offered to some youth in state custody based on the guidelines of specific programs.</b> The establishment of Transitional Living Services through contracted providers may be utilized as Voluntary Post-Custody Service Options. These services are contingent upon the availability of allocated service slots, funding and the continuation of specific grants and/or contracts. The decision to utilize such options shall be made by the young adult and the CFT, with the scope of available services and related goals clearly outlined as a transition plan within the young adult's Interdependent Living Plan, or an approved Transition Plan as developed by the provider agency.</p> <p>3. Young adults who emancipate to adulthood from state custody at or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are eligible for Transitional Living Services. Service options may be limited to programs utilizing private funding streams for delinquent youth who attained 18 years of age in a facility placement determined to make them ineligible for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services.</p> <p>4. Youth and young adults 17 to 23 years of age released from state custody to permanency, who were in state custody for at least one continuous year starting at age 14 or older, are eligible for Transitional Living Services. Youth in state custody age seventeen (17) or older may receive Transitional Living Services based on the guidelines of specific programs and identified need. <b>Service options may be limited to programs utilizing private funding streams for delinquent youth released from a facility placement determined to make them ineligible for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services, or for married young adults.</b></p>
<b>F. Maintenance of Eligibility for Transitional Living Services</b>	<p>1. Youth may continue to receive Transitional Living Services within the guidelines established in the individual provider agency contracts.</p> <p>2. Young adults receiving Transitional Living Services may request DCS</p>

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	<p>Voluntary Post-Custody Services. Approval of such requests shall be based on the young adult's eligibility for these services as outlined in this policy</p> <p>3. Factors that may jeopardize continued eligibility for Transitional Living Services are outlined in the individual provider agency contracts, but may include young adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Consistently refusing to make progress on mutually agreed upon goals, to include reasonable efforts to increase self-sufficiency.</li><li>b) Conviction of a felony offense.</li><li>c) Exhibiting a pattern of behavior that jeopardizes the safety and well being of self or others.</li><li>d) Establishing legal residence in another state or country.</li></ul> <p>4. These services are contingent upon the availability of allocated service slots, funding and the continuation of specific grants and/or contracts.</p>
<b>G. Eligibility for Educational and Training Vouchers (ETVs)</b>	<p>1. <b>Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV's)</b> shall only be utilized to fund expenses for eligible post-secondary institutions. The DCS Scholarship Administrator can be contacted to verify the eligibility of a chosen program.</p> <p>2. Young adults who emancipate to adulthood directly from state custody at or after 18 years of age are eligible for ETVs.</p> <p>3. Young adults adjudicated delinquent are to be afforded access to the same service options, with the following restrictions: <u>Delinquent youth must have been in a foster care placement during the current custodial episode, prior to attaining their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.</u> Youth placed in secured facilities upon attaining their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or at the time they exit state custody are not eligible for ETVs. Such facilities include Youth Development Centers and detention facilities.</p> <p>4. Youth 16 years of age or older in state custody may be eligible for ETVs. Youth adjudicated delinquent are to be afforded access to the same service options, with the following exception: youth placed in secured facilities are not eligible for ETVs.</p> <p>5. Youth 15 years of age or older who exit state custody to adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship may be eligible for ETVs.</p> <p>6. Youth 16 years of age or older who exit state custody to reunification may be eligible for ETVs.</p> <p>7. ETVs may be administered on the behalf of eligible youth and young adults up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Young adults may maintain eligibility for ETVs up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday under the conditions identified in <a href="#">DCS Policy 16.55, Post Secondary Scholarships: Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) and</a></p>

	<p><a href="#">State Funded Scholarship (SFS)</a> and section H of this policy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. Young adults must receive ETV funding assistance before reaching their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</li><li>9. Young adults who are undocumented residents of the United States are not eligible for ETVs once released from state custody.</li><li>10. Young adults may have personal assets of <u>no more</u> than \$10,000.</li></ol>
<b>H. Maintenance of Eligibility for Educational and Training Vouchers (ETVs)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Young adults must maintain enrollment in an eligible post secondary program.</li><li>2. Young adults must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher per semester in order to maintain eligibility for ETVs. Young adults attending technical job training programs, internships or apprenticeships must maintain a passing outcome for each applicable period of evaluation.</li><li>3. Where available, it is expected that young adults shall participate in work-study as outlined by the post-secondary education program. Young adults shall be required to have a job if they are not attending school during summer breaks, unless attending summer semester classes full-time.</li><li>4. Young adults must maintain sufficient enrollment to attain an applicable degree or certification within the guidelines for reasonable program completion, as set forth by the educational institution. A student's decision to apply for, or adjust their schedule to part-time attendance status, can result in forfeiture of otherwise established financial aid awards. Part time attendance requires a written justification and advance approval from the Director of Interdependent Living or designee.  <u>Note:</u> This does not apply to Summer Semester attendance, when such attendance is in addition to an already established full-time academic year's schedule. Students attending school part-time must work at least part time.</li><li>5. Young adults who received ETVs before achieving their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday may continue receiving ETV assistance up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday, if they were making satisfactory progress in their educational or training program at age 21. Young adults, who receive an ETV award at 22 years of age and reach their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday within the awarded semester or term, are eligible to maintain the award through that semester or term. No subsequent ETV assistance may be awarded.</li><li>6. Young adults 18 up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday who do not maintain the specified GPA or passing outcome for an applicable semester or evaluation period may be afforded one such probationary term to achieve the necessary outcome to continue receiving ETVs. Young adults may receive ETV funding for this probationary term. Young adults who do not achieve the necessary outcome for the probationary term may not receive ETVs for the following term.</li><li>7. Young adults receiving ETV assistance for a probationary term require a written justification, which must be placed in the ETV File. The written</li></ol>



	<p>justification must include the signature of the IL Program Director or designee.</p> <p>8. Young adults 18 through 20 years of age who do not maintain the specified GPA or passing outcome for an applicable probationary term may re-apply for ETVs. Young adults must demonstrate achievement of the necessary passing outcome for one applicable term, utilizing resources other than ETVs, to be considered.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Young adults over 21 years of age may not re-apply for ETV assistance following a failed probationary term.</p> <p>9. Factors that may jeopardize continued eligibility for ETVs, in addition to those already specified, may include young adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Convicted of a felony offense,</li> <li>b) Exhibiting a pattern of behavior that jeopardizes the safety and well being of self or others,</li> <li>c) Establishing legal residence in another state or country.</li> </ul>
<b>I. Eligibility for the State Funded Scholarship</b>	<p>1. Youth and young adults eligible for ETVs are also eligible for the State Funded Scholarship.</p> <p>2. The <b>State Funded Scholarship</b> shall only be utilized to fund expenses for Tennessee state-sponsored post-secondary institutions. The DCS State Funded Scholarship Administrator can be contacted to verify the eligibility of a chosen program.</p> <p>3 Priority for the administration of the State Funded Scholarship shall be given to youth and young adults not otherwise eligible for ETV's.</p> <p>4 Youth and young adults who exited state custody from Youth Development Centers and detention facilities after the age of 16 are eligible for the State Funded Scholarship.</p> <p>5 In addition, youth and young adults who lose eligibility for ETVs are eligible (<u>to apply for</u>) the State Funded Scholarship.</p>
<b>J. Maintenance of eligibility for the State Funded Scholarship</b>	<p>The same guidelines for maintenance of eligibility for ETV's shall be applied to the State Funded Scholarship, once administration of the scholarship begins. However, the award may be provided to otherwise eligible applicants starting after 21 years of age, and extended to the 24<sup>th</sup> birthday.</p>
<b>K. Eligibility of young adults to enter Voluntary Post Custody Services following</b>	<p>1. Young adults determined to be eligible for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services as outlined in this policy may return and request such services following a break with DCS. Young adults must request these services before they attain their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Young adults 21 up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday may request Transitional Living Services, with an understanding</p>

<b>a break in involvement with DCS</b>	<p>that the options for assistance shall be specifically limited to those not Chafee funded.</p> <p>2. Youth categorized as Runaways or Escapees who attain their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are eligible for DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services upon return to the care of DCS, consistent with their status as outlined in Section C, Parts 1 and 2 of this policy. This eligibility extends up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</p>
<b>L. Eligibility for post-custody Housing and Daily Living Support</b>	<p>1. Young adults otherwise eligible for DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services remain eligible for traditional DCS funded support of a housing placement, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The young adult may maintain such a supported placement if still in high school until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and attending the educational program as a full time student.</li><li>b) There must be a reasonable expectation that the young adult shall graduate with a high school diploma within the same academic year the young adult achieves their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. This must be verified in writing by the young adult's high school guidance office. However, the traditional DCS funded <u>placement support</u> must end when the young adult achieves their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.</li><li>c) The supported placement must be in the least restrictive environment possible, and the young adult must agree to the placement arrangement.</li><li>d) It is expected that provider agency contracts shall be adjusted to the lowest level of payment possible. If clinical concerns warrant the possible continuation of a higher level of care and reimbursement, such justification must be submitted in writing for review by the RA and IL Director for approval. The written justification must be drafted and signed by a licensed clinician, and also include a reasonable plan for the reduction of the advised level of care.</li></ul> <p>2. Young adults who do not qualify for the continuation of traditional DCS funded support of a placement (as defined in this section of the current policy) may receive such support through other resources, to include IL Wraparound funds, or the Interdependent Living Allowance (see Policy 16.56). Young adults in this status and receiving DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services shall be identified as "<u>Self-Sufficient</u>" as a placement in TNKids.</p> <p>3. The young adult receiving services in a resource home also approved to provide foster care services must agree to the provisions as set forth in Section H of <a href="#">DCS Policy 16.4: Resource Home Approval</a>.</p> <p>4. Concerns regarding placement adjustments for youth still in state custody as they transition to adulthood, as outlined in Section L of this policy, are subject to review per <a href="#">DCS Policy 31.7, Building, Preparing and Maintaining Child and Family Teams</a>. The CFT is the mechanism by which such placement decisions are reviewed and determined.</p>



<p><b>M. Eligibility for the Interdependent Living Allowance (ILA)</b></p>	<p>Young adults 18 up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday are eligible to receive the <a href="#">Interdependent Living Allowance (ILA)</a> as outlined in <a href="#">DCS Policy 16.56, Interdependent Living Direct Payment Allowance</a>, based on the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The young adult must be receiving DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services.</li> <li>2. The young adult must be enrolled in an approved post-secondary educational program (refer to Section G of this policy).</li> <li>3. The young adult must not be receiving any other source of funding assistance for housing, to include paid reimbursements to DCS supported placements, IL Wraparound housing support, or financial aid awards that cover room and board for a campus housing arrangement.</li> </ol>
<p><b>N. Maintenance of Eligibility for the Interdependent Living Allowance (ILA)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Young adults must maintain academic eligibility as outlined in Section H of this policy to continue receiving the Interdependent Living Allowance.</li> <li>2. It is the responsibility of the Office of Interdependent Living to confirm this eligibility on a monthly basis, and to make adjustments to the applicable rates (See DCS Policy 16.56, Section B) or administration of the ILA as applicable. It is the responsibility of the assigned FSW to effectively communicate the necessary information needed to verify such eligibility to an Interdependent Living Program Specialist; this must occur in advance of the monthly payment confirmations. No payment confirmations shall occur without this verification.</li> </ol>
<p><b>O. Due Process for the Appeal of Eligibility-Related Decisions</b></p>	<p>Youth and Young Adults have the right to request a review of decisions made by DCS related to the provision of DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services; this includes the decision to terminate DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services. In such cases, the following procedure shall be followed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The youth or young adult shall submit a written statement (<b>CS-0761, Program Review Request</b>) that outlines the specific reasons they are not in agreement with the decisions made by DCS related to the provision of service. The youth or young adult's request shall be submitted within ten (10) calendar days of <u>(receiving notice of)</u> the decision.</li> <li>2. The Program Review Request shall be reviewed by the applicable RA and the Director of IL Director. This decision is binding, with the final authority held by the Director of IL.</li> </ol>
<p><b>P. Special Circumstances</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Youth in TN DCS state custody residing in another state under ICPC are eligible for Interdependent Living Services from TN DCS, as outlined in this policy. It is the responsibility of the FSW, with technical assistance from an Interdependent Living Program Specialist, to develop an ILP that identifies the necessary resources that shall provide such services in the youth's</li> </ol>

	<p>location. However, it becomes the responsibility of the receiving state to provide Chafee-based services post-custody when the youth exits TN state custody consistent with that state's policies and guidelines. TN DCS may provide ETV assistance to youth, contingent upon their eligibility and in coordination with the receiving state.</p> <p>2. Young adults otherwise eligible for DCS voluntary post-custody services and/or ETV assistance remain eligible for these services if they reside in another state for the purpose of attending an approved post-secondary education program, and if they do not establish residence in that state. However, it becomes the responsibility of the receiving state to provide Chafee-based services post-custody if a young adult establishes residence in that state. TN DCS may provide ETV assistance to the young adult, contingent upon their eligibility and in coordination with the receiving state.</p> <p>3. Young adults who emancipated to adulthood from state custody in another state but who currently reside in Tennessee are eligible for Voluntary Post-Custody Services. Provision of service is contingent upon receipt by the DCS Office of Interdependent Living of written verification of this status from the receiving state.</p> <p>4. It is necessary that the DCS Office of Interdependent Living receive verification that the young adult is not actively receiving services from the receiving state. It is appropriate for the receiving state to provide ETV assistance to the young adult. Young adults in this category of eligibility are not eligible for the State Funded Scholarship until they establish residence in Tennessee.</p>
<b>Forms:</b>	<a href="#"><u>CS-0761 Program Review Request</u></a>
<b>Collateral Documents:</b>	<a href="#"><u>IL Wraparound List/Protocol</u></a>